Black Dispatch
Oklahoma City, Okla

Holsey Says Negro Making Good Defense Contribution In Field Of Agriculture

Cites Cases of Group and Individual Effort in Productive Effort

MAY 24 1941

Idabel Agent Makes Great Record

By ALBON L. HOLSEY
Field Officer AAA, for ANP

The southern Negro farmer is making a valuable and vital contribution to the national defense program through his impressive activities in the field of agriculture.

Defense through agriculture includes ample reserves for food and proper diets to insure better health for fighting men, industrial workers and the nation as a whole.

Through many provisions of the AAA including the ever-normal granary our nation has protective reserves of wheat and corn and through the live-at-home program of the agricultural extension service individual farmers are increasing supplies of home grown food products for family use.

So much evidence has been assembled to show that inadequate diets and malnutrition are chief causes of poor health that the division of consumer protection of the National Defense Advisory commission has undertaken a nation-wide campaign "to improve the nutritional value of cheap staple foods," "increase the food purchasing power of low-income groups," "educate the people on proper food selection" and broaden the activities of "governmental agencies now conducting nutritional programs," the nation's health as a measure for national defense.

Negro home demonstration agents, home economics teachers and home economists under the FSA are placing a new emphasis on home gardens, canning and preserving foods and budgeting the home pantry supply on a proper diet basis. For 1941, the AAA has extended its benefits to include more gardens and canning for home use.

Secretary Claude R. Wickard of the department of agriculture has recently asked the farmers to step up egg production during the next 15 months to 10 million cases of 30 dozen each above normal production and adds that the department "will support long term egg prices until June, 1943 . . . at a figure which should make egg production profitable."

MAY 24 1941

P. H. Stone, Negro state extension leader for Georgia, reports many activities among the 29,000 Negro 4-H club members in his state to increase poultry products. Making home-made brooder houses for chicks and the candling and grading of eggs are important features for the 1941 program. Mr. Stone reports 134 members in one county who are planting gardens and purchasing their seed on a cooperative basis and that the county board of education in another county has set up a revolving fund to enable 4-H club girls to begin poultry projects with 50 chicks each.

R. E. Wyer, Jr., Negro county agent for Leon county, Florida, with headquarters at Tallahassee, reports 23 community meetings with adults and 4-H club groups at which time the new home garden programs of the AAA was discussed. "Feeding the nation and feeding yourselves" was the slogan for these meetings.

Frank E. Pinder, Negro county agent for Alachua county, Florida, enrolls his 4-H club members in the "Home Garden National Defense club" and pledges the members "to do their part in this national defense drive by growing a year-round garden."

James M. Watlington, Negro county agent at Idabel, Okla., reports a steady increase in home grown food and feed. From 1938 to 1940 the average number of hogs for each Negro farm family in his county increased from 3.2 to 5, gardens have been doubled in size and the average number of laying hens from 18 to 30. "These increases represent our interest in national defense and through the 1941 AAA program there will be still further increases," said Mr. Watlington.

Henry Espy, Negro county agent of Crittendon county, Arkansas, reports over 3,000 Negro farmers in his county enrolled in the Plant-to-Prosper campaign promoted by a Memphis daily newspaper.

Paul O. Brooks, Negro county agent of Logan county, Oklahoma, reports greatly increased interest in beef cattle production among his 4-H club members since two of his boys won cash prizes for beef cattle exhibited at the county fair.

Texas has had two meat shows this spring; one at Palestine and the other at Houston. Nearly 2,000 pieces of meat and containers of sausage, lard and other by-products were shown at each exhibition which represented Negro farmer activities of more than 40 counties in Central and South Texas.

These examples could be multiplied many times to show how Negro farmers are cooperating in national defense by producing more and better food.

Orangeburg, S. C. Times & Demo.
May 31, 1941

116,570 Mattresses For The Low-Income Group

ROCK HILL.—More than one hundred thousand mattresses had been completed by the middle of May for low-income rural families in South Carolina, reports Miss Lonny L. Landrum, state home demonstration agent in charge of the mattress project. Exact figures include 73,291 mattresses for Negro families and 43,279 for white families, or a total of 116,570.

Materials totaling nearly 12,000 bales of cotton and nearly 1000 bales of ticking were furnished for these mattresses by the Surplus Commodities Corporation through the AAA. Instruction in mattress making is provided by Extension Service workers with the able assitance of local volunteer leaders. For example, the report of May 17 indicated 241 white men and women and 256 Negro men and women assisting during the week with mattress making at 68 community centers over the state.

Some 22,000 additional applications for mattresses are on hand and the work will go steadily forward to completion.

Chicago Bee
Chicago, Illinois

New Cotton Uses Replace Markets Shut Off By War

JUN 29 1941

TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE, Ala., June 26—(ANP)—New domestic uses and markets developed through the national farm program of the United States Department of Agriculture are filling some of the gap left when the war shut off important foreign markets for United States grown cotton, according to Albon L. Holsey, field officer, southern division, AAA.

By July 1 this year about 470,000 bales of cotton will have been used or distributed through the cotton-matress program and the cotton stamp plan, Mr. Holsey said. In addition, the supplementary cotton program is expected to be the means of utilizing 75,000 to 100,000 bales of raw cotton in the form of usable goods for farm families. These programs, he explained, make it possible for low-income families and those receiving public assistance to use more cotton goods than they otherwise would.

Use of cotton in place of imported bagging materials is another development in the search for new outlets for cotton. Under the cotton bagging for cotton bales proram, about 1,000,000 bales of 1940 cotton were covered with cotton bagging instead of the usual jute. The 1941 program provides for 2,000,000 bale covers which will require about 22,000 bales of raw cotton. The use of cotton bags for the Austrian winter pea and vetch seeds distributed as conservation materials through the agricultural conservation program also has opened a new market to cotton.

JUN 29 1941

Two other cotton use projects sponsored by the department of agriculture may account for the use of about 25,000 bales of cotton this year. These are the cotton insualtion and the cotton writing paper programs.

Through its new regional labcratory in New Orleans, the department of agriculture is carrying on research for additional means to expand the domestic consumption of cotton.

Montgomery, Ala., Advertiser
July 9, 1941

AAA Really Isn't Santa, Says Davis

TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE, ALA., July 8.—P. O. Davis, State extension director, told negro rural ministers from 15 Alabama counties gathered here for a two-day conference that AAA is not Santa Claus.

"As ministers, you know that divine promises are made with the understanding that certain action is taken before they are fulfilled," said Mr. Davis. "And the same is true of the Triple-A program. Certain performances are necessary before the farmer can qualify for payments."

In an address of welcome, President F. D. Patterson told the ministers that "as leaders in your communities, you owe it to those whom you serve to keep informed on such programs as the Triple-A because they are designed to help low income families to improve their conditions."

General provisions of the AAA program were discussed by A. W. Jones, AAA State administrator, and Walter I. Randolph, president of the Alabama Farm Bureau Federation. Told of the leadership of Senator Bankhead in securing passage by Congress of the 85 per cent loan provision for cotton.

Other speakers from Auburn included J. C. Ford, coordinator of extension service, and W. D. Salmon, of the experiment station.

Washington representatives of the AAA included E. A. Miller, assistant to director, Southern division, who was in charge of the conference, and C. F. Clark and Travis Taylor, economist, in the Southern division.

Negro speakers included J. H. Clayborn, president, Shorter College, Little Rock, Ark.; Chaplain Harry V. Richardson, Tuskegee Institute; the Rev. B. B. Ford, Macon County rural minister; James P. Davis, and A. L. Holsey, Triple-A field officer.

Afro-American
Baltimore, Maryland

"AAA No Santa," Ala. Clerics Told

TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE, Ala.—P. O. Davis, extension director for Alabama, told rural ministers from 15 counties gathered here for a two-day conference that "The AAA is not Santa Claus."

"As ministers, you know that divine promises are made with the understanding that certain action is taken before they are fulfilled," said Mr. Davis. "The same is true of the Triple-A program Certain performances are necessary before the farmer can qualify for payments."

JUL 19 1941

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Rural Ministers Study AAA Program

TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE, July 24—(ANP)—"The earth belongs to God and farmers who till the soil are not owners but custodians of its fertility" was the reminder which Chaplain H. V. Richardson gave to a conference of Negro rural ministers who were here last week to study provisions of the AAA program.

President F. D. Patterson told the ministers that they had a "wonderful opportunity for rendering a practical service to their communities by keeping themselves informed on the AAA and other programs which are designed to help low-income rural families."

D. H. Clayborn, president of Shorter college, Little Rock, said that the AAA was born in emergency and necessity."

P. O. Davis, state extension director, told the group that "AAA is not Santa Claus" and reminded them that "divine promises are only fulfilled after certain performances and that the same is true of the AAA which requires the farmer to carry out certain provisions such as conserving the soil, growing food and feed crop in order to receive the benefiit payments."

The Alabama conference was one of a series being held throughout the south and was under the general direction of E. A. Miller, assistant to director, southern division, AAA. Other Washington officials were C. E. Gilbert and Travis Taylor, economists. Negro AAA field officers who addressed the group were James P. Davis, Little Rock and A. L. Holsey of Tuskegee Institute.

A telegram to I. W. Duggan, director, southern divisions, AAA, pledging their support to the Food-for-Defense program was sent by a committee of the Ministers.

JUL 26 1941

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

RURALISTS ATTEND FARM CONFAB

Seven race farm leaders attended the two-day regional conference of southern agriculturalists at Peabody Hotel last week. Secretary of Agriculture C. R. Wickard, following the keynote address Monday morning, explained the objectives of the conference. He called upon the southern farm producers the necessity of increasing their food productions for 1942.

Three of the Negro ruralists are shown in the above picture during a visit to the Memphis World office shortly after the conference closed. Left to rigrt are L. O. Swingler, Memphis World editor; D. W. Lindsey, Negro County Agent, of Yazoo City, Miss.; M. M. Hubert, Negro State Extension leader, Jackson, Miss.; and A. L. Holsey, Administrative Assistant of the AAA, Tuskegee, Ala.

James P. Davis, Little Rock, Ark.; Mrs. J. B. Moton, Capahosic, Va., both Administrative Assistants of the AAA: Dr. E. B. Evans, of Prairie View College, and Negro State Extension Leader; J. E. Clayton, of Houston, Texas, representative of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, and Mrs. [illegible] Oliver, State Home Agent, [illegible] Jackson, Miss., were also present at the sessions.

Mr. Holsey is exceutive secretary of the National Negro Business League, and contributed in large measure to the great success of the League's 1941 session in Memphis this past August.

OCT

News
Birmingham, Ala.

It's Later Than 1861

At a planters' rally the other night down in the old Black Belt, action was taken which is more reminiscent of 1861 than consonant with the needs and realities of 1941. Under the sponsorship of the Farm Bureau Federation, which recently put forward a plan for radically changing the Department of Agriculture with a view to rendering that agency more "efficient," 250 Perry County planters came together for a barbecue on the banks of the historic Cahaba, a few miles above the site of one of Alabama's first capitals.

After a fraternal barbecue, we are told by *The Marion Times-Standard,* their chairman addressed those assembled and gave voice to a concern that was troubling their collective hearts. This was the predatory policy of the government, operating through the Farm Security Administration of the Agriculture Department, with reference to their labor.

Like the slave-stealers of olden times, federal agents were sneaking about a man's plantation and fixing to make off with "his" best hands. In this case, the stealers were enveigling the hands with promises of farms of their own, which they might secure on long terms through the government's tenant purchase program. Although this would seem highly advantageous to the state, the nation and the social order, while "the best hands" would be the group most entitled to federal help in achieving land ownership, the assembled planters expressed themselves as dead against it.

The shadow of the plantation evidently still deeply prejudices minds which are unwilling to concede the justice of permitting their "best hands"—who have served them most faithfully and well—a chance to graduate into small ownership.

* * *

Economic forces have already dissolved the *status quo* in the Black Belt. The shift from cotton to cattle has released thousands upon thousands of tenants from their long attachment to the soil, driving them off the land entirely to swell the ranks of the unskilled unemployed in the towns, or reducing them to the status of day laborers on the farms. Tractors have multiplied, and each tractor has taken the place of several patient men behind their plodding mules.

It is neither possible nor desirable to arrest this process, nor can all the thousands of uprooted tenants be replanted on the same nourishing earth, but certainly the best of those remaining deserve to be protected against the insecurity which has been advancing so inexorably. And the only real security is that inherent in a little land of their own, from which, under expert and disinterested supervision, they can derive a rounded living of cash and subsistence crops.

It will make for social peace and stability if the Perry County planters, as well as other large land-owners in the Black Belt who may share their point of view, can bring themselves to realize that it is to their own advantage, over the long haul, to assist their best tenants and wage-hands toward economic independence. However benevolent may be the intent of the planters toward their "best hands," there is more than a trace of ante-bellum philosophy behind their protest, which seems to assume that the planter has a vested interest in the human beings who till his fields, as well as in the fields themselves.

Such a concept is ill-suited to modern America, and most inappropriate at this moment when we are bending every effort to make our democracy strong in its own defense.

* * *

The Alabama Farm Bureau Federation, which sponsored the Perry County rally, will do well to disassociate itself from the protest which issued from it. Some have charged that the federation in this state is more representative of the large land-owners than of farm people as a whole, and that the reorganization plan for the Department of Agriculture which the Farm Bureau has sponsored represents a camouflaged attempt to scuttle the administration's valuable programs for helping small owners, tenants and farm laborers, in the name of furthering economy and efficiency.

Should there develop similar attacks on the Farm Security Administration program from meetings sponsored by the Farm Bureau, it would lend weight to the charge that the Farm Bureau is serving the interests of a privileged few, rather than of all the farmers.

Birmingham, Ala. News
June 17, 1941

Decrease Is Revealed In Farms In Alabama

UNIVERSITY, Ala.—Alabama has 231,746 farms, the smallest reported since 1910, according to the 1940 Census of Agriculture bulletin received this week by the Bureau of Busines Research, University of Alabama.

The number of white farm operators reached its peak in 1935, while the number of Negro operators was largest in 1910. The number of Negro operators dropped from 110,443 to 73,364 in 1940.

Whites operated 81.4 per cent of the farm acreage, according to calculations of the Bureau of Business Research, while Negroes operated 18.6 per cent. The average acreage per farm operated by whites was 98.4, and the average farm operated by Negroes totaled 48.5 acres.

Cullman County reported the largest number of farms, with a total of 6,577. DeKalb County ranked second with 6,526. Cullman also led in 1935 in number of farms, followed by Madison and Dallas. Cullman County farms were relatively small, averaging 57.2 acres. Only Jefferson, Marshall and Walker have smaller average size farms.

The Bureau of Business Reearch's analysis of census figures indicates the importance of the Black Belt as a cattle-raising section. Of the nine counties in the state reporting, more than 20,000 cattle and calves over three months old, only two, Baldwin and Monroe, are not in the Black Belt.

Cullman and DeKalb Counties, however, lead in the number of cows milked. These two counties also lead in the number of chickens on farms.

Marion, Ala., Standard
June 19, 1941

Perry Negro Farmers Plan More Dairy Feed

Milk production in Perry County is taking on added impetus, and is adding to the income of these farmers. At a recent meeting on the farm of Dock Jones, a group of 54 milk producers were told by F. W. Burns, extension dairyman, how they could improve their herd, grow more feed and have better pastures, and how good bulls pay. All of these farmers are selling milk, but as a result of this meeting they pledged to grow more feed, in order to increase their production. Sorghum is one of the crops that has been planted in recent days to feed and use as silage.

Farmers in Perry County are making use of every available means to improve their farms, according to L. C. Johnson, Negro county agent, and thereby grow more feed and food that will help in giving them a larger income and help make the needed improvements around their farms. They have terraced hundreds of acres of land, planted legumes, and they are now planting lespedeza sericea, kudzu, and alfalfa, both for hay and soil improvement. Dock Jones of Bell Community has ten acres of alfalfa, and eight acres of sorghum for feeding cows.

Times-Picayune
New Orleans, La.

Flame Thrower May Take Hoeing Out of Cotton Field

2200-Degree Blaze Found to Kill Grass But Not Staple

(The Associated Press)

Montgomery, Ala., July 19.—Cotton farming may be revolutionized by a war-born invention—a flame thrower.

Already jets of 2200-degree flames are replacing cotton choppers (hoers) on an expansive plantation, and actually crops farmed in this fashion apparently are faring better than those in companion fields cultivated in the traditional manner.

The invention kills the grass; seemingly doesn't injure the cotton.

Captain Price McLemore, who has been called from his farm to Gunter Field as a reserve officer, estimates throwers he invented can be built for one-mule plows at $10 each and figures this type cultivation costs only 10 cents an acre. He built a model himself on an outlay of $5.

Flame cultivation is as simple as it is cheap. In the pilot models, one mounted on a hand-plow and a two-row outfit on the front of a tractor, fuel oil and compressed air are used to provide the flame.

Flames Spout from Jets

Spouting from jets on either side of the row, the flames strike the ground a couple of inches or so from the crop and blanket the whole area between each other. At present, a sweep plow is mounted behind the tractor to cultivate the middle in the ordinary manner.

The tractor moves at regular cultivating speed, and McLemore estimated it takes less than one-fiftieth of a second for the flame to traverse the length of its dispersion. This means that both grass and crops are subjected to a one-fiftieth treatment of 2200-degree heat.

Except for the withering of tenderest grass, there's apparently no change immediately as the tractor moves along. But four hours later the seemingly uninjured grass turns brown and dies to its roots.

The representative of an implement company who came to look over McLemore's gadget reported his analysis showed that cells of the grass blades were exploded by steam generated within them and that the plant died of something similar to suffocation.

Able to Distribute Heat

The stalk of the crop, being exceedingly thick (in comparison to grass) is able to distribute the heat so rapidly that no portion of the plant will be subjected to serious heating, whereas the thin blades of grass absorb but cannot readily dissipate the heat.

It works on corn as well as cotton, McLemore said, adding the prediction that it opened unlimited opportunity for development of mechanical pickers and harvesters because it does away with the necessity of maintaining a large reservoir of farm labor heretofore used for cultivation and then utilized in harvesting.

McLemore, however, doesn't recommend that all farmers start using flame throwers right now, pointing out this is the first time, so far as he knows, of such type cultivation being used from planting to harvesting, and no completely fire-tended crops have yet been harvested.

The Alabama extension service is working with McLemore in developing the new method. Rows in the same field are being cultivated by different means, and actually those getting flame baths appear to have more blooms and look healthier.

How He Got the Idea

Hoein' McLemore points out, killed what grass was up but usually turned under or raised near enough the surface for sprouting seeds that had been dropped by the previous year's grass crop. That doesn't happen with a flame thrower and any seeds on the surface are scorched.

How'd he get the idea?

Well, two years ago there was an exceptionally wet spring. Grass outran crops all over Alabama. McLemore fought with hoe and plow, but didn't make much headway. Then came a Sunday, and he leisurely turned the pages of the Montgomery Advertiser until his eyes fell upon an Associated Press photo of an Italian flame-throwing tank in action.

"Damned if that wouldn't fix that grass," was his reaction, but he adds: "I burned up a hell of a lot of cotton before I got any result except being called crazy."

Constitution
Atlanta, Georgia

MY DAY: Rural Community Tries Co-operation

By Eleanor Roosevelt.

WASHINGTON, Friday—I was enormously interested yesterday in hearing a young farmer from Alabama, tell of the plan which he and his friends had followed in rehabilitating their rural community. They simply mobilized all the available government agencies, federal, state and local, and they found they had many resources from which to draw.

One particularly good instance of co-operation among the neighbors, is how they contribute days of work to each other. Our ancestors did this in pioneer days, when they had to build a house, or a barn, or husk the corn. Today, they find they can build a house for a family and buy the materials at cost of $300. If they cut their own lumber they can do it for much less.

Then he told me how the community is trying to raise the level of its stock. They have built a community house with shops in it, and even make their own furniture as they build their houses!

I asked what they are doing for health, and heard, to, my joy, that they are building a clinic. They hope to have a nurse there, particularly to help the women with their babies and to meet many emergencies which arise with children.

Even though this effort is being made in the state of Alabama, it is being made for both colored and white families, and they work side by side in accomplishing results. I was so encouraged by the whole account of what is being done, that I would have given a great deal if I had known how adequately to show the young man how enthusiastic I felt. I hope he keeps right on and is so successful that his pattern will be followed by many other communities: north, south, east and west.

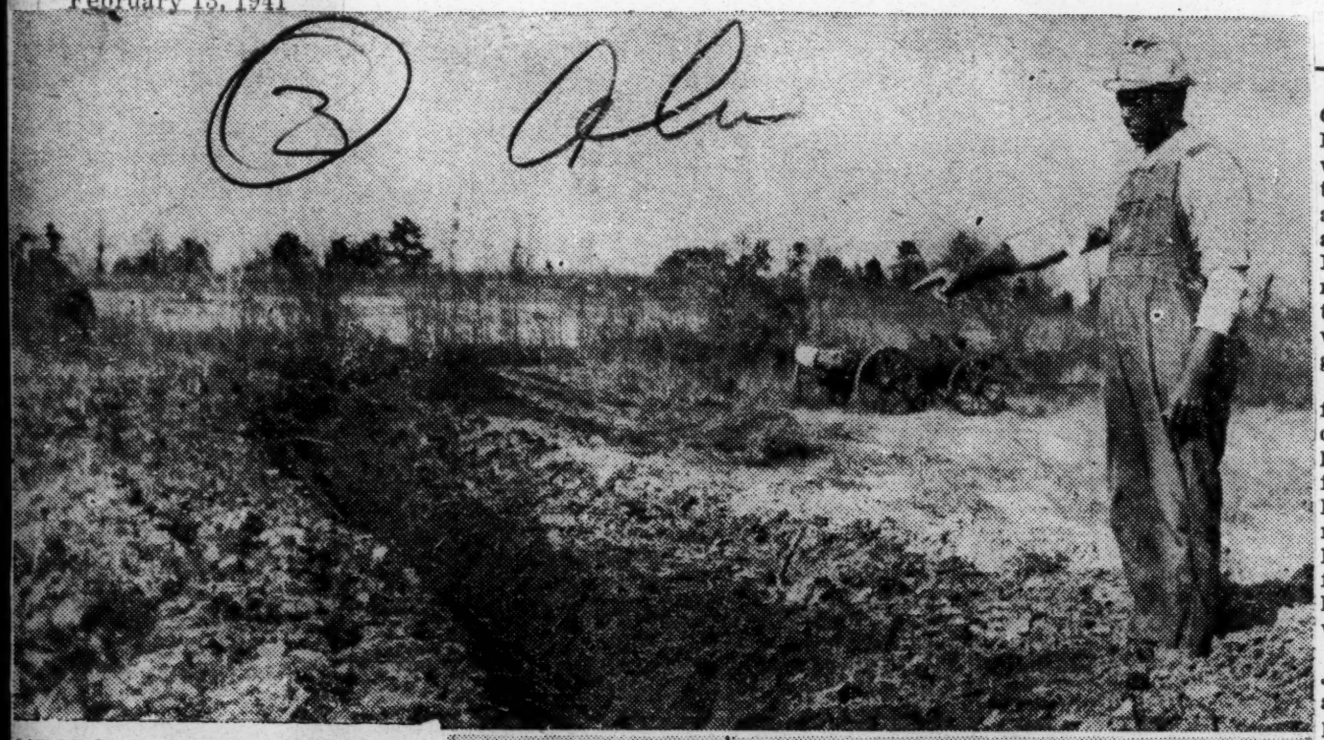
Mrs. John L. Whitehurst, the president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, came to see me this morning and I was much impressed by the work which she has done in the federation, and on the state defense council of Maryland.

It was a joy today to see Mrs. Grenville Emmet, who has come to Washington to spend the winter with her two daughters. I enjoyed also having Mrs. Florence Kerr's WPA regional directors lunch with me and give me a word picture of conditions in their various regions. It is most interesting to hear from so many different groups of people about conditions in various parts of the country.

3-1941

AL ABAMA

Greenville, Ala., Advocate
February 13, 1941



NEGRO FARMERS LEARN TO BUILD THEIR OWN TERRACES Elliot Robbins, Negro County Agent, is shown below loading slip scrape at Oklahoma, in the first of a series of demonstrations conducted the past month in Terrace Construction. Farmer G. W. Saucer, of Sweget Home is shown at left assisting the agent, while a group of 4-H Club boys and farmers look on.
Farmer Jim Rhodes, above, also of Oklahoma, points to first terrace constructed with slip scrape and plow following demonstration on his farm. Over 60,000 linear feet of terraces valued at $450 were constructed on Negro farms of Butler the past month. Terrace Construction with plow and slip scrape will be one of the main features at the Negro Farmers' Conference on Friday.

Advertiser
Montgomery, Ala.

New Life At 58

MAY 13 1941

The Crowder family, Negro tenants of Wilcox County, Ala., have been with Landlord Tom Moore for 30 years. Up until seven years ago when Joe Crowder, the father, joined a local extension club organized by the Negro county agents, as he says: "I had just worked, that's all, never got my head above the water because I didn't know how to plan or manage, or do nothing but raise cotton and a little corn." Of those years Mr. Moore, his landlord, says: "Joe was just a botcher, always worked hard but never got anywhere."

MAY 13 1941

In 1933, with a family of 10, Joe obtained the first cow he had ever owned. He now has 4 milk cows besides profit from yearlings. He always kept a few chickens around, but now maintains a family size flock. "I always killed a hog or two," he says, "but I never thought of having enough meat to run me." The garden plot has been enlarged, an orchard planted, and ample food and feed is grown for family and livestock, an unheard-of thing prior to the time Joe joined forces with his county agents.

Not the least of his accomplishments has been Joe's interest in building compost heaps. From a two-acre demonstration in 1939, he got 2,050 pounds of seed cotton by applying only 100 pounds of commercial fertilizers to the acre.

It has taken a long time to get enough cash for home improvements, but the kitchen has been ceiled, a well bored near the house, the kitchen stove moved out of the middle of the floor, and new storage space provided. The house itself was recently treated to a coat of brown oil stain, trimmed with whitewash.

MAY 13 1941

Beginning from a curiosity to see if there was any sense to the teachings of Negro county agents, Joe Crowder has not only proved their worth but has been fired with the ambition to be a better farmer. At 65, Joe firmly believes that the last seven years have meant more to him than all the previous years of his life.

Mr. Moore has offered every encouragement to the new way of farming and expressed the wish to the county agents that all his tenants would go and do likewise. Mr. Moore is an outstanding example of the spirit of cooperation and helpfulness necessary to work out the problem of landlord and tenant. —The Progressive Farmer.

Dothan Ala. Eagle
May 13, 1941

A New Landlord

Over in Alabama's Black Belt country 73 Negro families are about to begin work with a new landlord. He is none other than our Uncle Sam, working through the medium of one of his splendid agencies, the Farm Security Administration.

Uncle Sam's interest in Black Belt farm families isn't a casual concern nor a small-scale experiment. It is his determination to bring security to large numbers of Negro families who can no longer make their livelihood in that section at cotton planting.

Acreage reduction, boll weevil infestation and general business conditions have conspired against the Black Belt to deprive it of its principal source of income, which for many years was cotton. Since they have been forced to abandon cotton, Black Belt farmers have steadily been turning toward livestock raising and dairying—two industries for which her fertile pasture lands are ideally suited.

But livestock raising and dairying require much less farm labor than cotton planting, and as cotton fields have been converted into pasture lands hundreds of farm families have lost their jobs. Landlords cannot be justly blamed for this condition. In fact, the blame cannot be laid on anyone or anything. They are the victims of changing economic conditions.

So, in their attempt to give relief where relief is deserved, the Farm Security Administration has acquired 8,229 acres of Black Belt land for the rehabilitation of families who no longer can work in cotton patches. On this land, 73 families will engage in a "lease cooperative," with, as Hamner Cobbs says, a landlord that won't go broke. The Negroes will be under strict supervision and will be put into the dairying business, grazing their cows in a common pasture. The FSA is confident that the project will be successful and will serve to help rebuild the weakened economy of the Black Belt.

The enterprise has every chance for success, we believe, for after all, producing milk for the market is little different from producing any other cash crop.

Age-Herald
Birmingham, Ala.

The Home Front

FEB 5 1941

BY CARROLL KILPATRICK
Washington Bureau, The Birmingham Age-Herald-News

Coffee County, Alabama, is one of the most talked about farming communities in the United States. In the fight for democracy within the gates it is a battlefront of the utmost importance. Fortunately, reports from that front reaching the Farm Security Administration in Washington tell a heartening and encouraging story of the ability of average Americans to win in the battle against poverty and ignorance.

It is a story of democratic achievement, worthy of the attention of the nation.

By 1930, as all Alabamians know, a prosperous farmer was more difficult to find than almost any other known human specimen. In Coffee County, for example, about 60,000 acres of farm land were foreclosed by one bank alone, and by 1935 75 per cent of all the county's farmers were tenants.

Not many families in Coffee County owned any livestock at all, and those that did found their stock almost as exhausted as the eroded soil. Two-thirds of the children of the county were afflicted with hookworm. Malaria and pellagra were widespread. Houses were in a wretched state of disrepair, and sanitary facilities were almost unknown. In 25 per cent of the farm families one or both the parents were illiterate.

FEB 5 1941

The Resettlement Administration (later to become the Farm Security Administration) set out to see what could be done in the way of rehabilitation. Various state and federal agencies that might be interested in the work were invited to send representatives to discuss proposals for the program.

With the financial help of FSA new houses were built, as well as barns, smokehouses, poultry houses and sanitary privies. Each farmer worked out, with the farm management supervisor, a plan by which he would use his land to utmost advantage and eventually pay off his loan from the government.

Each farmer's wife worked out a management plan for the home, and agreed to can at least 80 quarts of food a year for every member of the family. The farm family was to get an education as well as an allotment.

On each farm a certain agreage is set aside every year for vegetables, another for feed crops, another for livestock and poultry and another for pasturage. Then there is a field for cash crops and a field for a cover crop to rebuild the soil and prevent erosion.

Under the direction of farm home supervisors, the kitchen is put to good use, too. Before the program got under way the average Coffee County family had been canning about 107 quarts of fruits and vegetables per year. In 1938 the loan families canned an average of 301 quarts of fruits and vegetables. And in 1939 the increase of canned goods over 1938 was 243 per cent.

* * *

Dr. Will W. Alexander, formerly head of the Farm Security Administration, recently remarked that he believed one of the most significant features of the program was the "illustration of the kind of thing that can be done with the cooperation of federal and local groups in rehabilitation work."

Besides the FSA, Alabama health, educational and agricultural agencies have cooperated to the fullest in the Coffee County project. Today there are more children in schools in Coffee County than ever before, and the State Department of Education has worked out a practical and sensible educational program in farm life.

The same type of work has been done by the State Health Department. With the help of the federal government and state health officials, infant mortality in the county has already dropped from 55 to 19 deaths per 1,000 lives births. Deaths of mothers at childbirth have dropped from 10.4 to 6.6 per 1,000 live births. And where doctors formerly considered themselves fortunate if they collected 25 cents on the dollar charged, they are now receiving nearly 75 cents on the dollar.

* * *

In many respects, the FSA, which is primarily education, is the most important New Deal invention as far as the farming states are concerned.

The problems of agriculture are not altogether financial. No matter what the income of an illiterate and ignorant farmer, he will not meet his problems of health, diversification, soil conservation and production intelligently. But if he has a clear understanding of the needs of the soil and the needs of his family, he should be able to develop a program that will be beneficial to both.

For too long in many states rural education has been neglected, and the whole country has suffered. The cost of the rehabilitation work now is heavy, and it must be borne by the whole people. In the end they will be paid dividends in a healthier and richer farm community. But whatever the immediate costs, they need to be borne. They are less today than they will be tomorrow.

* * *

Coffee County has cost the government something like a half million dollars a year since the beginning of the project. Much of the cost is in the form of loans that eventually will be repaid. Another part of the cost is in construction work now finished.

Already the nation has benefited substantially from its investment. Figures show that families in the first three years of the project increased their average net worth from $502 to $1,070, or 113 per cent. Figures published in 1939 showed that families who had been on the project one year only at that time had increased their net worth by an average of $245 each.

In 1938, 40 Coffee County families sold hogs for the first time in their lives. The increased value of feed and seed produced by all families was more than one-third over the year before. In that year they had three times as much food and eight times as much cash as they had when the government stepped into the picture.

And soils are being built and conserved instead of being destroyed under the old pressure of squeezing from the land every possible dollar's worth of crops.

Montgomery, Ala Journal
May 19, 1941

A New Landlord

(Dothan Eagle)

Over in Alabama's Black Belt county 73 Negro families are about to begin work with a new landlord. He is none other than our Uncle Sam, working through the medium of one of his splendid agencies, the Farm Security Administration.

Uncle Sam's interest in Black Belt farm families isn't a casual concern nor a small-scale experiment. It is his determination to bring security to large numbers of Negro families who can no longer make their livelihood in that section at cotton planting.

Acreage reduction, boll weevil infestation and general business conditions have conspired against the Black Belt to deprive it of its principal source of income, which for many years was cotton. Since they have been forced to abandon cotton, Black Belt farmers have steadily been turning toward livestock raising and dairying—two industries for which the fertile pasture lands are ideally suited.

But livestock raising and dairying require much less farm labor than cotton planting, and as cotton fields have been converted into pasture lands hundreds of farm families have lost their jobs. Landlords cannot be justly blamed for this condition. In fact, the blame cannot be laid on anyone or anything. They are the victims of changing economic conditions.

So, in their attempt to give relief where relief is deserved, the Farm Security Administration has acquired 8,229 acres of Black Belt land for the rehabilitation of families who no longer can work in cotton patches. On this land, 73 families will engage in a "lease cooperative," with, as Hamner Cobb says, a landlord that won't go broke. The Negroes will be under strict supervision and will be put into the dairying business, grazing their cows in a common pasture. The FSA is confident that the project will be successful and will serve to help rebuild the weakened economy of the Black Belt.

The enterprise has every chance for success, we believe, for after all, producing milk for the market is little different from producing any other cash crop.

Montgomery, Ala. Journal
May 22, 1941

Milk in Greene County

The Opelika Daily News is author for these figures: "Over in Greene County, one company purchases milk from 1,300 farmers, mostly small tenant farmers. On an average these farmers own three and one-half cows per farm. A large number of them are negro farmers. After supplying home needs, the average farmer receives from this company the sum of $101.00 per year. This is from milk alone and does not take into account money received from the sale of calves and other benefits which may accrue." We believe dairy cows and eventually poultry will be the two leading industries of Greene County.—Greene County Democrat.

Huntsville, Ala: Mercury
August 7, 1941

Farmers Told Prices To Be Paid For Farm Lands

Two of the best known Madison county Negro farmers whose lands are to be included in the reservation that is being acquired by the War Department for its chemical plant and arsenal have already closed deals for other farms and will not lose any time in agricultural operations by being compelled to move. Moses Love has purchased the Fairview farm of 180 acres on Pulaski Pike from Tax Collector Frank Manning for $11,700 and an additional 180 acres from W. W. Moon for $8,000. The combined acreage is less than one half as large as the farm he is moving away from. Walter Jacobs, who farms in the same neighborhood with Love, has bought a Pulaski pike farm from A.C. Potts for $7,000 and another from A. S. Graham for $3,200.

Government agents are appraising the value of lands that are to be take n over an dsome of the owners of farms have been told what amounts in cash they will be offered. While figures have not been disclosed to the public, land owners generally say the price are satisfactory.